

Open Letter to Congress
P.O. Box 497
Murray Hill, NJ 07974
March 12, 1986

Dear Colleague:

The undersigned are part of an ad-hoc group of scientists concerned about the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Attached find an Open Letter to Congress which is being circulated to scientists and engineers at industrial and government laboratories. We urge you to sign the letter and to circulate it among your colleagues.

We plan to collect signatures for a period of roughly three months and to send the signed petitions to each member of the U.S. Congress in the Spring of 1986. All efforts will be made to ensure that no representations as to the views of the signatories are made in the press or anywhere else, beyond the actual text of the letter.

Please return signed petitions to the above address. Only persons currently or formerly affiliated with industrial or governmental laboratories should sign. If you have further questions, please call (201) - 467-7629.

Original signed by:

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NOTE: Institutional affiliations for identification purposes only

* Nobel laureate

BIOGRAPHIES OF SPONSORS

PHILIP W. ANDERSON

born: December 13, 1923
Ph.D. 1949 Physics, Harvard University.
Naval Research Laboratory, 1943-1945.
AT&T Bell Labs, 1949-1984; Consultant 1984-present.
Princeton University, 1975-present.
Nobel Prize in Physics, 1977 (magnetism and disordered systems).
National Medal of Science, 1982 (President Reagan).
Member, National Academy of Sciences.

JOHN BACKUS

born: December 12, 1924
MS 1950 Mathematics, Columbia University.
IBM 1950-present, IBM Fellow, 1983-present.
Inventor of FORTRAN (1957).
AM Turing Award 1977 (highest computer science honor).
National Medal of Science 1975 (President Ford).
Member, National Academy of Sciences.
Member, National Academy of Engineering.

OWEN CHAMBERLAIN

born: July 10, 1920
Ph.D. 1949 Physics, University of Chicago.
Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, 1942-1946.
Lawrence Berkley Laboratory, 1934-present.
Nobel Prize in physics, 1959 (discovery of anti-proton).
Member, National Academy of Sciences.

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born: March 26, 1920
Ph.D. 1943 Physics, University of Rochester.
Brookhaven National Laboratory, 1960-present.
Member, National Academy of Sciences.

ALBERT V. CREW

born: February 18, 1927
Ph.D. 1950 Physics, University of Liverpool, England.
Director, Argonne National Laboratory, 1961-1967.
Currently: Professor, University of Chicago.
Member, National Academy of Sciences.

GERHART FRIEDLANDER

born: July 28, 1916
Ph.D. 1942 Nuclear Chemistry, University of California, Berkeley.
Staff Member and Group Leader, Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, 1943-1946.
General Electric Research Laboratory, 1946-1948.
Brookhaven National Laboratory, 1948-present; Chairman, Chemistry
Department, 1968-1977.
Member, National Academy of Sciences

PIERRE C. HOHENBERG

born: October 3, 1934
Ph.D. Physics, Harvard University
AT&T Bell Labs (currently Head of Theoretical Physics Department).
Vice President for Physical Science, New York Academy
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Member NSF Materials Research Advisory Committee 1981-present.

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Associate Administrator, Office of Aeronautics and
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Administration, 1981-1983.
Associate Dean of Engineering, M.I.T., 1983-present.
Oak Ridge National Laboratory, 1956-58
Member, National Academy of Engineering.
Currently serving on: USAF Scientific Advisory Board;
National Commission on Space.

J. CARSON MARK

born: July 6, 1913.
Ph.D. 1938 Mathematics, University of Toronto.
Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory 1945-1973. Theoretical
Division Leader 1947-1973 in charge of new weapons
design.
Currently: consultant at Los Alamos and on
many government boards, including (since 1976) Advisory
Committee on Reactor Safeguards of the Nuclear Regulatory
Commission.

EDWIN M. McMILLAN

born: September 18, 1907
Ph.D. 1938 Mathematics, University
Lawrence Berkley Laboratory, 1934-1973; Director, 1971-1973.
Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, 1942-1945.
Trustee, Rand Corporation, 1959-1969.
Nobel Prize in Chemistry, 1951 (discovery of Plutonium and other elements).
Member, National Academy of Sciences.

MARSHALL W. NIRENBERG

born: April 19, 1927
Ph.D. 1957 Biochemistry, University of Michigan.
National Institute of Health, 1957-present.
Nobel Prize in Medicine, 1968 (deciphering the genetic code).
Member, National Academy of Sciences.

THRESSA C. STADTMAN

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Ph.D. 1949 Microbiology, University of California, Berkeley.
National Institute of Health, 1950-present; Section chief, 1966-present.
Member, National Academy of Sciences.

KENNETH L. THOMPSON

born: February 4, 1943
M.S. 1966 Electrical Engineering, University of California, Berkeley.
AT&T Bell labs, 1966-present.
Co-Author, UNIX operating system.
A.M. Turing award (highest computer science honor).
Member, National Academy of Engineering.
Member, National Academy of Sciences.

ROBERT W. WILSON

born: January 10, 1936
Ph.D. 1962 Physics, California Institute of Technology.
AT&T Bell Labs, 1963-present; Head of Radio Physics Research
Department, 1976-present.
Nobel Prize in Physics, 1978 (co-discoverer of cosmic background radiation
from the Big Bang).
Member, National Academy of Sciences.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE U.S. CONGRESS

June 19, 1986

We, the undersigned scientists and engineers currently or formerly at government and industrial laboratories, wish to express our serious concerns about the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), commonly known as "Star Wars". Recent statements from the Administration give the erroneous impression that there is virtually unanimous support for this initiative from the scientific and technical community. In fact the SDI has grown into a major program without the technical and policy scrutiny appropriate to an undertaking of this magnitude. We therefore feel that we must speak out now.

The stated goal of the SDI is developing the means to render nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete". We believe that realization of this dream is not feasible in the foreseeable future. The more limited goal of developing partial defenses against ballistic missiles does not fundamentally alter the current policy of deterrence, yet it represents a significant escalation of the arms race and runs the serious risk of jeopardizing existing arms control treaties and future negotiations. Furthermore, in view of the international economic competition faced by the U.S., it should be asked whether the country can afford the diversion of resources, especially scientific and technical manpower, that the SDI entails.

The Congressional Office of Technology Assessment has raised serious questions concerning the scope and scale of the present SDI effort. We urge the Congress to heed these concerns and to limit the SDI to a scale appropriate to exploratory research, while assessing the costs, the risks and the potential benefits of the program in comparison with alternative strategies for strengthening the overall security of the nation. Top priority must be given to this task before the momentum inherent in a program of such magnitude makes this venture irreversible.

[This statement reflects the views of the signatories and not those of the institutions with which they are affiliated]

Please return signed petitions to: Open Letter to Congress, P.O. Box 497, Murray Hill, NJ 07974; (201) 467-7629

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